

FirstNet delays draft RFP, cites finance committee questions

Fierce Wireless Tech By Monica Allevan

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The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) this week said it would delay the release of a draft RFP due to questions that arose in its finance committee.

On Tuesday, four FirstNet committees met in separate sessions: governance and personnel; technology; outreach; and finance. Board members were expected to approve a complete draft RFP this week, but on Wednesday, the full board met and said it would delay a vote to issue the RFP until a later date.

During a call with media after the board meeting, TJ Kennedy, acting executive director at FirstNet, said he was pleased with progress made thus far across the board, from outreach to acquisition. "We just want to make sure we have all the details put together, and you'll be seeing that come out over the next several weeks," he said.

The board is expected to next meet via teleconference in the next several weeks. The other committees were okay with the RFP, so once the finance committee's issues are addressed, it can move forward.

Stuart Kupinsky, FirstNet's chief counsel, said they couldn't disclose too much about the finance committee's outstanding issues. The committee is dealing with confidential materials related to market research, and revealing too much could jeopardize their standing.

The FirstNet finance committee's concerns this week came to light after a closed meeting which included discussions about acquisition strategy, proposed partners, structural mechanisms and other topics, *Mission Critical Mag* reported.

Tasked with building the nation's first nationwide broadband network, FirstNet took a lot of flak early in its history for demonstrating a lack of transparency. The Senate Commerce, Science

and Transportation Committee convened a hearing earlier this month titled: "Three Years Later: Are We Any Closer To A Nationwide Public Safety Wireless Broadband Network?"

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, called for the hearing after the U.S. Office of Inspector General (OIG) [published a report late last year](#) detailing some of the problems FirstNet encountered, including around reporting procedures and conflicts of interest.

Separately, FirstNet announced it will be adding another week to the response time on its expansive second notice seeking public comment, extending the deadline to April 20.

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